

In the Claims:

Please cancel claims 1-3.

Please add the following new claim:

24. A process for etching away a fixed thickness of silicon oxide in an integrated circuit structure on a semiconductor substrate in an etching apparatus which comprises:

- a) exposing an oxide surface of an integrated circuit structure on a semiconductor substrate to a remote nitrogen plasma; and
- b) maintaining an rf bias on said semiconductor substrate during said exposure of said oxide surface to said remote nitrogen plasma;

whereby a fixed thickness of silicon oxide will be removed from said oxide surface, with the oxide thickness removed dependent upon the power level of said rf bias on said semiconductor substrate.

REMARKS

Claims 4-24 are now in the application. Claims 1-3 have been cancelled. New claim 24 has been added. New independent claim 24 consists of a combination of independent claim 4 (as previously amended in Applicants' response dated August 14, 2001) and dependent claim 7. Presuming that dependent claim 7 was fully considered, during examination) as if it was an independent claim, there should be no new issues raised by presenting dependent claim 7 in independent form to include all of the limitations of independent claim 4 from which claim 7 depends.